

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended)      A method of accessing data within a research system by an application external to ~~the~~ an electronic system comprising the steps of:
  - a.      formatting a searchable database within the research system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included; and
  - b.      an external application different than the research system accessing one or more nodes within the directory tree structure and obtaining data from the one or more nodes by utilizing an applications programming interface (API) associated with the research system, wherein the external application formats a query language string using the API such that the formatted query language string is used directly by the research system to access the directory tree structure and obtain data from the searchable database specified by the query language string, further wherein the query language string is a command string written according to a query language, wherein accessing one or more nodes is performed utilizing a research module, further wherein the research module includes a keyword search, a hierarchical search, a dichotomous key search, and a parametric search, and further wherein each utilization of the research module includes availability of each search at any location, including at any displayed page, within the searchable database, wherein the keyword search, the hierarchical search, the dichotomous key search, and the parametric search are available at any displayed page within the searchable database without requiring user input.
2. (previously presented)      The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the applications programming interface accesses the one or more nodes within the directory tree structure using

the query language string defining a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure.

3. (original) The method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the related data is text, graphics, objects, links to other nodes within the directory tree structure, links to web sites external to the electronic system, or any combination thereof.

4. (original) The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the searchable database is distributed into more than one physical location.

5. (original) The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the step of accessing one or more nodes is performed by a server.

6. (original) The method as claimed in claim 5 further comprising the step of establishing an internet connection with the server to access the one or more nodes.

7. (original) The method as claimed in claim 6 wherein the internet connection is established with a computer system at a remote location from the server.

8. (canceled)

9. (previously presented) A research system for providing access to a searchable database by an application external to the research system comprising:

- a. means for formatting the searchable database into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included; and
- b. means for an external application different than the research system accessing one or more nodes within the directory tree structure and obtaining data from the one or more nodes by utilizing an applications programming interface (API)

associated with the research system, wherein the external application formats a query language string using the API such that the formatted query language string is used directly by the research system to access the directory tree structure and obtain data from the searchable database specified by the query language string, further wherein the query language string is a command string written according to a query language, wherein accessing one or more nodes is performed utilizing a research module, further wherein the research module includes a keyword search, a hierarchical search, a dichotomous key search, and a parametric search, and further wherein each utilization of the research module includes availability of each search at any location, including at any displayed page, within the searchable database, wherein the keyword search, the hierarchical search, the dichotomous key search, and the parametric search are available at any displayed page within the searchable database without requiring user input.

10. (previously presented) The research system as claimed in claim 9 wherein the applications programming interface accesses the one or more nodes within the directory tree structure using the query language string defining a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure.

11. (currently amended) The research system as claimed in claim 10 wherein the related data is text, graphics, objects, links to other nodes within the directory tree structure, links to web sites external to the ~~electronic~~ research system, or any combination thereof.

12. (original) The research system as claimed in claim 9 wherein the searchable database is distributed into more than one physical location.

13. (original) The research system as claimed in claim 9 wherein the means for accessing one or more nodes is performed by a server.

14. (original) The research system as claimed in claim 13 further comprising means for establishing an internet connection with the server to access the one or more nodes.

15. (original) The research system as claimed in claim 14 wherein the internet connection is established with a computer system at a remote location from the server.

16. (canceled)

17. (previously presented) A research system for providing access to a searchable database by an application external to the research system comprising a research server configured to format the searchable database into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, and an external application different than the research system accessing one or more nodes within the directory tree structure and obtaining data from the one or more nodes by utilizing an applications programming interface (API) associated with the research system, wherein the external application formats a query language string using the API such that the formatted query language string is used directly by the research system to access the directory tree structure and obtain data from the searchable database specified by the query language string, further wherein the query language string is a command string written according to a query language, wherein the research server accesses the one or more nodes by utilizing a research module, further wherein the research module includes a keyword search, a hierarchical search, a dichotomous key search, and a parametric search, and further wherein each utilization of the research module includes availability of each search at any location, including at any displayed page, within the searchable database, wherein the keyword search, the hierarchical search, the dichotomous key search, and the parametric search are available at any displayed page within the searchable database without requiring user input.

18. (previously presented) The research system as claimed in claim 17 wherein the applications programming interface utilizes the query language string to communicate with the research server, wherein the query language string defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure.

19. (currently amended) The research system as claimed in claim 18 wherein the related data is text, graphics, objects, links to other nodes within the directory tree structure, links to web sites external to the ~~electronic~~ research system, or any combination thereof.

20. (original) The research system as claimed in claim 17 wherein the searchable database is distributed into more than one physical location.

21. (original) The research system as claimed in claim 20 further comprising an interface circuit coupled to the research server to establish a connection with a computer system.

22. (original) The research system as claimed in claim 21 wherein the connection is established with the computer system at a remote location from the interface circuit.

23. (original) The research system as claimed in claim 22 wherein the connection is established with the remote computer system and the interface circuit over the internet to allow users to access the one or more nodes and to obtain data from the one or more nodes.

24. (canceled)

25. (currently amended) A network of devices for providing access to a searchable database by an application external to ~~the~~ a research system comprising:

- a. one or more computer systems configured to establish a connection with other systems; and
- b. a research server coupled to the one or more computer systems to format the searchable database into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, and an external application different than the research system accessing one or more nodes within the directory tree structure and obtaining data from the one or more nodes by utilizing

an applications programming interface (API) associated with the research system, wherein the external application formats a query language string using the API such that the formatted query language string is used directly by the research system to access the directory tree structure and obtain data from the searchable database specified by the query language string, further wherein the query language string is a command string written according to a query language, wherein the research server accesses the one or more nodes by utilizing a research module, further wherein the research module includes a keyword search, a hierarchical search, a dichotomous key search, and a parametric search, and further wherein each utilization of the research module includes availability of each search at any location, including at any displayed page, within the searchable database, wherein the keyword search, the hierarchical search, the dichotomous key search, and the parametric search are available at any displayed page within the searchable database without requiring user input.

26. (previously presented) The network of devices as claimed in claim 25 wherein the applications programming interface utilizes the query language string to communicate with the research server, wherein the query language string defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure.

27. (currently amended) The network of devices as claimed in claim 26 wherein the related data is text, graphics, objects, links to other nodes within the directory tree structure, links to web sites external to the ~~electronic~~ research system, or any combination thereof.

28. (original) The network of devices as claimed in claim 25 wherein the searchable database is distributed into more than one physical location.

29. (original) The network of devices as claimed in claim 25 wherein the one or more computer systems and the research server are coupled together over the internet to allow users to access the one or more nodes and to obtain data from the one or more nodes.

30. (canceled)

31. (previously presented) A method of accessing data within a research system by an application external to the research system comprising the steps of:

- a. formatting a searchable database within the research system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included; and
- b. an external application different than the research system accessing one or more nodes within the directory tree structure and obtaining data from the one or more nodes by utilizing an applications programming interface (API) associated with the research system, wherein the applications programming interface accesses the one or more nodes within the directory tree structure using a query language string, further wherein the query language string is a command string written according to a query language that defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure, wherein accessing one or more nodes is performed utilizing a research module, further wherein the research module includes a keyword search, a hierarchical search, a dichotomous key search, and a parametric search, and further wherein each utilization of the research module includes availability of each search at any location, including at any displayed page, within the searchable database, wherein the keyword search, the hierarchical search, the dichotomous key search, and the parametric search are available at any displayed page within the searchable database without requiring user input.

32. (currently amended) A method of accessing data within a research system by an application external to the research system comprising the steps of:

- a. formatting a searchable database within ~~the~~ an electronic system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a

corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included; and

- b. an external application different than the research system accessing one or more nodes within the directory tree structure and obtaining data from the one or more nodes by utilizing an applications programming interface (API) associated with the research system, wherein accessing one or more nodes is performed utilizing a research module, the research module includes a keyword search, a hierarchical search, a dichotomous key search, and a parametric search, and further wherein each utilization of the research module includes availability of each search at any location, including at any displayed page, within the searchable database, wherein the keyword search, the hierarchical search, the dichotomous key search, and the parametric search are available at any displayed page within the searchable database without requiring user input.